

I DON'T LIKE PROFESSIONS.

This is the reason which many give for not acknowledging Christ. They say, when urged upon the point, that they "don't like professions." A strange reason this for not obeying the express command of the Divine Saviour! What, if they do not like professions, do they equally dislike obeying commands? If so, they had better say: "I don't like obedience to the commands of God." But they profess to be well disposed to obey: it is only to *professing* that they object. Well, then, let them obey all the precepts which they find in the Bible, and we will not trouble them about a profession. Why should we? In that case they will obey the precept which enjoins a profession—they will do the thing appointed in *remembrance* of Christ.

But "I don't like professions." And who does like *mere* professions? Who ever contended in favor of a man's professing to have what he has not? Professions are very different from *mere* professions. Suppose a person has what he professes to have, what then? What is the objection to a profession in that case? I see none. If a man loves the Lord Jesus, I can see no harm in his professing or declaring his attachment to him. It is very natural to declare it. We profess attachment to others—to relatives, friends, benefactors, pastors, civil rulers. Why not to Christ? How does

his being the subject of the profession constitute such an objection to it? Is he the only being to whom we may not profess attachment?

“Don't like professions?” Why, yes, they do. Professions of friendship, of patriotism, and of loyalty they like. Why not of religion? Why should not religion be professed, as well as other things? Are attachment to the gospel, love to Christ, regard for the authority of Jehovah, and adherence to his government, the only things never to be professed?

I do not see any objection to professions; but I see propriety and utility in them, even if it were optional with us to make them or not. If it were left to our choice, it strikes me, we ought to choose to profess love and obedience to Christ. But suppose it is required, does not that alter the case? Will these persons say they do not like what God requires? And does he not require a profession? His inspired apostle twice exhorts Christians to *hold fast* their profession. Does not that imply that it is made, and *ought* to be made? How is a person to hold on to that of which he has never taken hold? Is not the public profession of Christ required when it is made a condition of salvation? Rom. x, 9. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God had raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Does not divine authority require it, when to the doing of it is made one of the most precious promises in the whole Bible? “Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess, also, before my Father which is in heaven.” Is not that duty, against the omission of which such a threatening lies as this? “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him I will also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” Matt. x, 32, 33. It is very plain that God requires professions, though some men do not like them.

"You don't like professions!" Then *Joshua*, a man that followed the Lord *fully*, falls under your censure, for he professed the service of God. "As for me and my house," said he, "we will serve the Lord." Are we to think the worse of him for this? Some ask what is the *use* of a profession? If they will observe what followed Joshua's profession, they will see the use of it. They will see that it brought out all Israel. "*We* will also serve the Lord," said they, and they entered that day into a covenant to serve him. Nor did their practice belie their profession; for it is recorded that "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua." So much for a profession. It is agreed on all hands that that professing generation, in piety and devotion to God, surpassed any other during the national existence of Israel.

We read, in 1 Tim. ii, 10, of certain things which are said to become "women professing godliness." It would seem from this to be the duty of women to profess godliness. And if of women, of men also, I suppose. What case of *real* subjection to the gospel of Christ do we read of, which was not also a case of "professed subjection" to it? Paul, in 2 Cor. ix, 13, speaks of some who glorified God for the "professed subjection" of others unto the gospel of Christ. It appears, then, that God is glorified by these professions. And I should presume, from certain passages in the Bible, that he is not glorified when a profession is withheld. There were in primitive times, some who did not like professions. It is no new thing not to like professions. In John xii, 42, 43, we read that "among the chief rulers, many believed on him; but," as they did not like professions, "because of the pharisees they did not confess him—for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." It is no honorable mention which is intended to

be made of another, of whom it is said that he was "a disciple of Jesus, but *secretly*, for fear of the Jews." John xix, 38. Fear made him decline a profession for a time; but at length he came out openly on the side of Christ, and besought Pilate for the body of Jesus.

If they who say they do not like professions mean that they do not like false, or loud, or ostentatious, or *barely verbal* professions, let them say so, and we will agree with them; but let them not mean this, and say, without qualification, they "don't like professions."

It is truly strange, because some now, as in apostolic times, "profess that they know God, but in works deny him," that others will never profess to know him. Because men have professed friendship, and have proved no friends, therefore they will not only not profess friendship, but they will abstain from certain acts and expressions of friendship, because they involve a profession of it! It is a pity that men who are going to give an account of themselves to God, should reason and act thus.

Well, they must do as they please; but of one thing I am sure: The hour is coming when, however they may now dislike professions, they will like them. They may not now like to confess Christ before men, but they will then like to have Christ confess them before his Father. They may not like to call him now the beloved of their souls, but they will like to have him call them, on that day, the blessed of his Father.

